Green groups: no medals in sight for Barroso II

Title Halfway through its term in office, the European Commission is falling behind in the race to create sustainable long-term prosperity in Europe, warn Europe?s leading green groups in a critical assessment of the Commission?s environmental performance since 2010 released on Tuesday 3 July. This report finds among others that the Commission has acted to protect the environment even less than the first Barroso Commission. The report, inspired by a topical Olympic theme, assesses progress in nine EU policy fields with impacts on the environment and reviews the track record of 13 European Commissioners and Commission President José Manuel Barroso. Each policy field is given a mark out of ten based on two main factors: environmental ambition and the extent of environmental issues that the Commission has addressed. While the Commission has in some measure recognised the environmental, health and economic impact of enduring problems linked to resource depletion, pollution and ecological destruction, swifter action is required. Its flagship reform proposals on EU fisheries and agriculture policies would not put an end to industrial overfishing, nor halt animal and plant extinctions, nor soil, water and food pollution from pesticides. The Commission therefore only scores a 3.5/10 on agriculture and a 4.5/10 on fisheries. The Commission has acknowledged the economic and environmental rewards offered by clean energy and transport and an end to fossil fuel subsidies. But its mixed record on energy policy has not delivered clear measures to bring Europe closer to a modern energy system built around renewables and efficiency, and free from expensive energy imports and polluting greenhouse gases. Failure to live up to its own rhetoric has contributed to another low score of 4.5/10 for energy policy. Faced with the breakdown of an economic system operating beyond planetary limits, the Commission has so far lacked the courage to propose legislation for a new, sustainable economy and has continued to favour short-term fixes over long-term solutions for people?s health and the planet. This new assessment by the Green 10 (the coalition of the ten biggest European green NGOs of which BirdLif e Europe is a member) includes a series of policy-specific recommendations for the remaining two-and-a-half years of the Commission?s term that will help Europe successfully tackle the economic, climate and resource challenges facing the continent. To download the Green 10 report click here. For more information please contact Elodie Cantaloube, Media and Communication Assistant at BirdLife Europe.